

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 18

September 13, 2018

**SUBJECT: AERIAL PLATFORM TACTICS – ESTABLISHED**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Order is to establish criteria for the approval and use of Aerial Platform Tactics (APT). Aerial Platform Tactics are highly specialized airborne tactics that utilize Air Support Division aircraft with Metropolitan Division Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) personnel onboard. Aerial Platform Tactics serve as an immediate interdiction measure when responding to extreme deadly threats where the danger to the public and officers exceeds the Department's regular capacity to address it. The use of APT can place the Pilot, Tactical Flight Officer, and SWAT personnel in vulnerable positions while on board an aircraft with limited cover. Therefore, APT shall only be utilized in extraordinary circumstances. The use of this tactic shall only be approved when the relevant dangers are taken into consideration and outweighed by an immediate life-saving exigency, and conventional SWAT tactics have been, or will likely be, ineffective under the circumstances.

**PROCEDURE: AERIAL PLATFORM TACTICS – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/212.78, *Aerial Platform Tactics* has been established and is attached.

**AMENDMENTS:** This Order amends Section 4/212.78 of the Department Manual.

**AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY:** The Commanding Officer, Audit Division, shall review this directive and determine whether an audit or inspection shall be conducted in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

  
MICHAEL R. MOORE  
Chief of Police

Attachment

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**DEPARTMENT MANUAL  
VOLUME IV**  
**Revised by Special Order No.18 2018**

**212.78 AERIAL PLATFORM TACTICS**

**Definition.** *Aerial Platform Tactics (APT) are defined as highly specialized airborne tactics that utilize Air Support Division (ASD) aircraft with Metropolitan Division Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) personnel onboard who provide lethal cover and/or other tactical support. Aerial Platform Tactics serve as an immediate interdiction measure when responding to extreme deadly threats where the danger to the public and officers exceeds the Department's regular capacity to address it. The use of APT can place the Pilot, Tactical Flight Officer, and SWAT personnel in vulnerable positions while on board an aircraft with limited cover. Therefore, APT shall only be utilized in extraordinary circumstances.*

**Deployment Criteria.** *APT is a highly unconventional police tactic that is to be deployed only under extraordinary circumstances that meet the following criteria:*

- *When the relevant dangers are taken into consideration and outweighed by an immediate life-saving exigency, and conventional SWAT tactics have been, or will likely be, ineffective under the circumstances; and,*
- *When the threat is active, ongoing, and deadly.*

**Note:** *Aerial Platform Tactics shall not be utilized for surveillance or unknown contingency purposes.*

*In determining whether an incident necessitates the deployment of APT, the following factors should be considered, based upon the facts known at the time of the incident:*

- *Suspects' access to potential victims;*
- *Suspects' use of superior weaponry and/or body armor; and,*
- *Suspects' position makes ground-based tactics impossible or impractical due to factors such as:*
  - *Elevated platform;*
  - *Limited roadway access;*
  - *Physical barriers; or,*
  - *Rural or hilly terrain.*

**Deployment Authorization.** *When the Incident Commander determines that APT may be necessary, the Incident Commander shall contact the Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau (CTSOB) via the Department Operations Center, Communications Division, or via the CTSOB chain of command. Aerial Platform Tactics shall only be approved via the concurrence of both the Commanding Officer (or acting) of CTSOB and the on-scene Incident Commander. In the event that the Commanding Officer, CTSOB, (or acting) are unavailable, an Assistant Chief may approve the use of APT in concurrence with the Incident Commander. The authorization to deploy APT does not constitute pre-approval for the use of deadly force. All personnel are individually required to adhere to the Department's use of force policy at all times. The Incident Commander shall constantly evaluate the continued need*

*for APT versus other conventional police tactics for the duration of the tactical incident. When the Incident Commander determines that the use of APT is no longer necessary, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, discontinue its use.*

*Note: Nothing in this section shall preclude appropriate ASD and SWAT personnel from beginning the staging process for APT while awaiting authorization for deployment. Direction to begin staging for APT does not equate to authorization to deploy APT. Staging may be done near or in the vicinity of the location of the crisis. The purpose for staging is to mitigate the delay of APT deployment, should the authorization for deployment be granted.*